

ECERS – South Carolina

Additional Notes for Clarification

Revised 2/3/2006
(Most recent changes are underlined)

General Notes

In 2003, a comprehensive resource for interpreting the ECERS-R, entitled “All About the ECERS-R”, was published by PACT Press, a division of Kaplan Early Learning Company. “All About the ECERS-R”, co-authored by Debby Cryer, Thelma Harms, & Cathy Riley, explains each indicator in detail and is illustrated with over 700 full color photos. These new Additional Notes for the ECERS-R have been reorganized to some extent and incorporate new material from “All About the ECERS-R”.

This note pertains to Items 15, Books and pictures, 19, Fine motor, 20, Art, 21, Music, 22, Blocks, 24, Dramatic play, 25, Nature/science, and 26, Math/number: For materials to be counted as accessible to children at the minimal (3) level, children must be able to reach and use the materials for a period of 1 hour a day in a program of 8 hours or more. The 1 hour can be provided at one time or as a combination of several periods throughout the day. This does not mean that each child must have a full hour to use the materials. However, it is required that children have a reasonable chance to use the materials at some time if they wish. If a program operates between 5 and 7 hours a day, the time required would be 45 minutes. For programs operating less than 5 hours, the time required would be 30 minutes.

	Less than 4 hrs.	5 – 7 hrs.	More than 7 hrs.
Number of hours in operation			
Approximate minutes required for accessibility	30	45	60

In calculating whether materials or activities are accessible for a *substantial portion of the day*, be sure to ask the teacher questions that give you a reasonable estimate of what happens during the times not observed. Calculate substantial part of the day based on what is observed, plus what the teacher says is usually done during the rest of the time. In piecing together accessibility of materials in various classrooms or areas to give credit for substantial portion of the day (e.g., outdoors/indoors), the requirements for materials in 5.1 must be met, unless exceptions are specified in notes on individual items. For further information on calculating the substantial portion of the day see “All About the ECERS-R”, pp. XVIII and XIX.

In piecing together accessibility of materials in various classrooms or areas to give credit for substantial portion of the day (e.g., outdoors/indoors), the requirements for materials in 5.1 must be met. For exceptions, see notes on individual items. For a full-day program (8 hours or longer), credit for *substantial portion of the day* can be given if the program is "off" by 10 minutes or less when calculating a third of the time the program is open.

For programs of 4 hours or less, the requirement of 1 hour of access in Gross motor equipment (8), Art (20), Sand/water (23), Dramatic play (24) is changed to ½ hour.

In all items involving any type of interaction, “staff” refers to those adults who are in the classroom and who work with the children daily (or almost daily), for a substantial portion of the day. This can include volunteers, if they are in the classroom for the required amount of time. Adults who are in the classroom for short periods of the day, or who are not a regular daily part of the classroom, do not count in evaluating whether the requirements of the item are met. For example, if a therapist, parent, or the director of a program comes into the classroom and interacts with the children, for short or irregular periods, these interactions do not count in scoring the item, unless the interaction is very negative.

As an exception, in parent co-operatives or lab schools, whose usual staffing pattern includes different people as teaching assistants daily, these assistants should be counted as staff.

Terms such as “many” or “variety” are used throughout the scale. We have provided numbers to guide decision making for many of these items. However, the actual number required will depend on the number of children enrolled, and the ages and abilities of those children. In cases where there are small groups of children, the numbers provided are likely to be reasonable. However, in classrooms with 15 or more children, more materials may be needed. In considering the difference between “variety” and “many”, think about a meal provided as a buffet, compared with a meal with many courses, but not as much choice. “Variety” of choices will be provided in the buffet, while this is not necessarily true in the meal.

The term “some” occurs most frequently in indicators that represent a minimal (3) level of quality, although occasionally it occurs at higher levels. In determining how much is needed to give credit for “some” in an indicator, consider the requirements in the parallel indicators at the lower and next higher level of quality. For example, if under “inadequate” (1) no materials are required, then some would mean “one or more”. In cases where a plural is used with the term “some”, then more than one would be required to give credit. When terms such as “very few” or “very little” or “Rarely” are used under inadequate, then “some” represents a mid-point between what is required for the 1 and for the 5 quality levels. Specific numbers are given in the notes for particular indicators.

The term “accessible” requires that children can reach and use materials by themselves. For materials to be considered accessible, they must be within view of younger preschoolers (2’s and 3’s). For older preschoolers (4’s and 5’s), if materials are stored in closed spaces, they can be considered accessible only if it is observed that children can freely access and use the materials.

"Gross motor equipment" includes *anything* provided for or regularly permitted by the staff to be used for stimulating gross motor activity. This includes manufactured, custom-made and/or natural objects used for climbing, sliding, balancing or other gross motor activity. It does not include objects meant to be used for other purposes, such as benches to sit on, shade trees or shelves children are not supposed to climb.

Scores for the Gross motor items should be based on observation of how the space, equipment, and supervision function. Especially with unusual, natural or innovative play opportunities, which may vary greatly, it is essential to observe carefully to see how children use these provisions and, what hazards and problems they encounter. Minor potential hazards that do not cause any observed problems, such as tree roots, low branches, hills, benches, low outdoor stages, should not be considered in scoring. Scores below 3 should be used only in situations that are very dangerous for children.

There are 4 items in the scale that consider what is observed in gross motor play. Space for gross motor play (7) covers safety issues described in the Playground Information handout, such as cushioning surfaces, and equipment hazards, as well as other safety precautions such as fencing. Gross motor equipment (8) covers the safety and appropriateness of equipment, e.g., condition, height, challenge level, including aspects of equipment safety provided in the Playground Information handout. Safety practices (14) include physical hazards described in the Playground Information handout and Notes for Clarification in the scale, as well as supervision issues. Supervision of gross motor activity (29) focuses on staff protection and facilitation of play. It is important to score what is observed in the appropriate item(s).

The term "weather permitting" is used in several items of the scale with regard to when children can participate in outdoor activities. "Weather permitting" means almost every day, unless there is active precipitation, extremely hot or cold conditions, or public announcements that advise people to remain indoors due to weather conditions such as high levels of pollution, extreme cold or heat that might cause health problems. Children should be dressed properly and taken outdoors on most days. This might require that the schedule be changed to allow children outdoor play in the early morning when it will be very hot later in the day. Or it might require that the program ensure that children have boots, and a change of clothes for a day when the grass is wet. After bad weather, staff should check the outdoor area, dry off equipment, sweep away water, or block off puddles, and so forth, as needed before children go out. Programs with protected outdoor areas, such as a deck or patio, are more likely to be able to meet the requirements for allowing outdoor activity daily, weather permitting.

Disinfectant and/or anti-bacterial wipes do not count for sanitation purposes. Products that can be given credit as sanitizing solutions are: bleach-water solution or a commercial product that states on the label or manufacturer's product sheet that it kills 99.9% of germs or is an EPA registered product. All commercial products used for sanitizing must be used according to manufacturer's guidelines.

Item 1: Indoor Space

- 1.1, 1.2 – Base score of this item only on the observed functioning of the space in the room used by the group most of the day.
- 3.1,3.2 Insufficient space means not enough space. Score “yes” only if room is extremely crowded. Sufficient space means enough space to function adequately. Do not give credit for 3.1 if adequate space is due to lack of basic furnishings and equipment. If a classroom is *terribly noisy*, so that conversations are difficult and noise levels are obviously uncomfortable for classroom users, then do not give credit for adequate sound-absorbing materials, even if a number of such materials are present (rugs, ceiling tiles). If noise typically is not at a comfortable level, for whatever reason, the sound absorbing materials are not effective enough. This is true even if the noise is not actually coming from within the classroom being observed.
- 1.3 – *Poor repair* means that there are major repair problems that present health and/or safety risks.
- 5.1 – To assess whether indoor space is “ample”, consider the various activity areas as well as routine care areas. For example, look to see if the block or housekeeping areas allow plenty of free movement for children to play, as well as for storage and use of the materials and equipment needed in the area. This indicator must be observed prior to scoring. If 2 or more activity areas are crowded, do not give credit for this indicator.
- 5.3 – To give credit for this indicator, the classroom and the bathroom (including toilet stalls) must be accessible to individuals with disabilities. Doorways must be 32 inches wide. The door handles must be operable with limited use of hands. The entrance door threshold should be ½” high or less and, if over ¼”, must be beveled to make it easier to roll over. However, access to the various play areas in the room is considered under item 4, “Room arrangement”, and not in this item. Adaptations to toilets (Ex., bars to help with stability) are considered in Item 2, indicators 3.3 & 5.3.
- If there are 2 or more bathrooms used by the children in the classroom, only one of them must be accessible. Accessibility to the building itself, and to the floor where the classroom is located, is also considered under this indicator. The definition of accessible should be based on the information in this note, with no additional requirements. Consider the width of doors and door handles when determining if space is accessible to children and adults with disabilities.
- 7.2 – This indicator deals with ventilation control. Credit can be given if windows can be opened or a ventilating fan can be used. Check the thermostat to see if it has a “fan only” option. Screens must be on windows if they are opened for ventilation.

Item 2: Furniture for Routine Care, Play, and Learning

- 1.1 – Insufficient basic furniture means not enough or an insufficient number of the basic furniture needed for routines, play and learning listed in the notes for clarification. If most of the toys are stored in crates or toy boxes and there are very few open shelves, a score of “Yes” is appropriate. Consider the number of cubbies, coat hooks, chairs, etc. Each child should have a cubby, a place to hang his coat, and a chair to use. If towels are used for rest time, everyone must have one. For programs operating more than 4 hours where a nap is required, each child must have a mat or cot.
- 3.2 – Sturdiness is a property of the furniture itself (i.e., will not break, fall over or collapse when used). If sturdy furniture is placed so that it can be easily knocked over, this is a problem with safety (Item 14 Safety practices), not the sturdiness of the furniture.
- 5.1 – This indicator only addresses the size of tables and chairs for children. If cubbies or other furnishings present problems due to size, consider this under 7.1. While seated back in a chair, children’s feet should be able to touch the floor (not necessarily rest flat on the floor); children should not have to perch on edge of chair to touch floor. Children also need to be able to rest their elbows on the table and fit their knees comfortably under the table. Rate here also if chairs and/or tables are too small for the children. Check child-sized several times during observation, including when all children are seated together, such as at lunch. “Most” means 75% of the children have child-sized tables and chairs. This also includes the tables and chairs in the cafeteria.
- 5.2 – Don’t be overly perfectionistic when scoring this indicator. If there is only a very minor problem that does not create a likely safety hazard, then give credit. For example, if a chair or table is slightly wobbly, but will not collapse or cause falls, or if a vinyl covered couch is slightly worn, but foam is not exposed, then do not count off for these small things, unless there are a substantial number of small problems causing an overall impression of poor repair.
- 7.1 – Cubbies for storage of children’s possessions must be in the classroom to be considered convenient, because of difficulties with supervision.
- 7.2 – In order to give credit, it is not necessary to see the furnishing being used, but it must be obvious that it is used for the appropriate activity and not, for example, only for storage. If unsure, ask staff how and when furnishing is used.

Item 3: Furnishings for Relaxation and Comfort

- 1.2 – Examples of soft toys include cloth puppets (even if they have hard heads or hands), dolls that are completely soft or that have soft bodies, and soft toy animals of all sizes, from those that can be held in one hand to large animals children can sit or lie on.
- 3.1 – “Some” soft furnishings means that there are at least 2 soft furnishings in the room being observed that the children may use in play.
- 3.2 – “Some” soft toys accessible means at least 3 soft toys are accessible to children.
- 5.1 – The cozy area must provide a substantial amount of softness for the children. This means that the cozy furnishings must allow a child to completely escape the normal hardness of the typical early childhood classroom. One small thing, in itself, does not create a cozy area. For example, a small padded chair, small child-sized beanbag chair, a few small stuffed animals, or a carpeted corner, are each not enough by themselves. However, credit could be given for a combination of such furnishings. Large furnishings, such as a mattress, couch, or adult-sized bean bag chair might be given credit if they provided the required substantial amount of softness.
- 5.1 & 5.2 – If there are 2 or more cozy areas, each area does not need to meet the requirements of 5.1 and 5.2. However, there must always be one area providing a substantial amount of softness where children can depend on being able to relax, that is not used for active physical play. It must be obvious that a child who wants to use a cozy area will not be constantly interrupted by other actively playing children. A combination of all areas can be used to judge whether a cozy area is accessible for a substantial portion of the day.
- 5.2 – The cozy area may be used for short periods as a group space (e.g., for dancing or circle time) but it should be protected from active play for most of the day. It should be away from active play equipment and have protection from active children (through placement of a barrier). It should not be located where there is a lot of traffic. Staff should be diligent to ensure that active children do not interfere with a child in the cozy area by jumping on or running into the child who is relaxing.
- 5.3 – Look especially to see that there are no tears in the covers of beanbag chairs, cushions, and couches that expose the padding or stuffing. Most soft furnishings means almost all, with only one or two minor exceptions.
- 7.1 – Give credit only for additional soft furnishings that can be used during play. If there is carpet under tables that cannot be used to sit or play on, it cannot be given credit for soft furnishings. There must be at least 2 soft furnishings in addition to the cozy area. Give credit only if there are two extra soft furnishings in addition to the cozy area.
- 7.2 – Many means enough soft toys so that children do not have to compete over them: for 2's & 3's at least 2 soft toys for each child; 4's & K's at least 10 toys or, if more than 20 children are allowed to attend at one time, enough for half the group size allowed.

Item 4: Room Arrangement for Play

- 1.2 – Do not score “Yes” unless area is very difficult to supervise. Take ages of children and size of room into consideration when deciding on a score. Add the word “very” before difficult. Visual supervision of play area is **very** difficult. This means that no part of the room is easy to supervise. Score this “Yes” only if no part of the room is easy to supervise.
- 3.2 – Before scoring this indicator, place yourself in various centers to see if supervision is difficult from any area because of placement of furniture. Consider the age and ability of the children, the number of staff present, and how diligent they are in watching the children, as well as how difficult the space is to supervise. There can be no blind spots in the classroom to receive credit for this indicator. In scoring this indicator, ask yourself these questions: Can I see every part of the room from every angle? Is it difficult because of placement of furniture? Are there high shelves in the middle of the room? Are there blind spots? Is staff diligent in supervising?
- 3.3 – Look to see that there is space enough for at least three different types of activities to go on at the same time for some period of the day.
- 5.1 -- Consider location of materials and centers.
- 5.2 – Look for a separation in physical space, actual distance between active or noisy centers and the more quiet centers. A barrier, such as open shelves, does not sufficiently cut down on noise. To give credit, all quiet areas must be separated from noisy areas. Consider the noise level and separation in physical space to determine if quiet and active centers interfere with one another. The key word is “interfere”.
- 5.3 -- Consider traffic paths.
- 7.2 – To get credit for this indicator, almost all materials in all centers must be organized for independent use. Labels are not required in all areas. Other examples that apply are: shelves not overcrowded, see-through or labeled containers used to store toys, materials such as puzzles and games easy to take off shelves, sets of materials in bins when needed, containers with tops easily opened by children.
- 7.3 -- To give credit for this indicator, materials must be rotated at least monthly.

Item 5: Space for Privacy

Consider privacy spaces indoors and outdoors for this item. For a definition of space for privacy see All About the ECERS-R, pp. 35, 39, 40.

- 3.2 – All spaces used for privacy must be easily supervised by staff. You should be able to supervise the privacy space as you move around the room. Score “No” if you have to look through peepholes, small openings, or at unusual angles. If you have to peep through small openings, then score this indicator “No.”
- 5.1 – Staff must enforce the protection rule, if needed, in order to be given credit for this indicator.
- 5.2 – This indicator applies only to the space “set aside” for privacy in 5.1. If credit is not given for 5.1, then credit can not be given for 5.2.

Item 6: Child-related Display

- 1.2 -- Materials must be meaningful to the children to be considered appropriate. Score “Yes” if over 50% of the display in the room is inappropriate for over 50% of the children or if any of the displayed materials show violence or prejudice.
- 1.3 -- Score this indicator “Yes” if 50% of the materials are **inappropriate** for the age group.
- 3.1 -- Consider only the display in the room(s) where children spend the majority of the time. Score this indicator “Yes” if 75% of the materials are **appropriate** the age group and none is violent or prejudicial.
- 3.2 -- “Some” means that at least 2 pieces of children’s work are displayed and can be easily seen by children.
- 5.1 -- “Much” of the display means that 30% relates closely to the current theme **and** children in the group. The first part of this indicator requires that a relationship exist between what is displayed and the activities that the current group of children is experiencing. It also requires that the children themselves be represented in the display. For instance, if the group is talking about the seasons of the year, a science project they are doing, or an upcoming field trip, these things should be represented in the display. The intent here is for the teacher to use the display for children as a teaching tool that changes as topics of interest change, and that adds more information to the children’s experiences. If needed, supplement observed information by asking if any of the display relates to topics of interest covered within the last month. Also look to see if there are photos of the children in the group on display, or self-portraits, or a height-chart with names. Photos of the children are not required, but the display should relate to the children in the group (e.g., stories dictated by children, charts done with children’s input).
- 5.2 -- Base score on overall impression of whether children’s art is well represented in the display. Consider what you feel when you have looked around the room from various areas. Counting number of pieces of artwork is not necessary. If 50/50 or too close to tell, give credit for most of the display done by children. If a detailed search is needed to find the children’s work, then do not give credit. “Most” of the display is work done by the children means at least 50% of all materials displayed is their work. The work does not have to be individualized to give credit for this indicator. For this indicator, children’s work does not have to be individualized. “Cookie cutter” art can be given credit.
- 7.1 -- Score “Yes” if more than 50% of children’s displayed work is individualized. (See All About the ECERS-R pp. 51, 52, & 53 for further definition of individualized. To give credit for this indicator at least 50% of the work must be individualized. Individualized means that each child has selected the subject and/or media and has carried out the work in his own creative way.
- 7.2 -- Three-dimensional work must have height, width, and depth. The children must be able to build up and out as they make “junk”, Styrofoam or wood sculptures, or use clay or play-dough (but not as in using cookie cutters with play-dough). Gluing things to a flat surface (as in gluing material scraps or Styrofoam “peanuts” to a flat piece of paper or cardboard) is not counted as 3-D.

Item 7: Space for Gross Motor Play

All spaces regularly used for gross motor activities should be considered in scoring this item.

1.2 & The second note (indicated with a cross) in the ECERS-R text should read:

3.2 Although no gross motor area that challenges children can ever be completely safe, the intent of this indicator is that major causes of serious injury are minimized, such as injury from falls onto inadequate cushioning surface, or entrapment, pinching of body parts, and protrusions from non-gross motor equipment that is in the space. Although an original note printed in the ECERS-R implies that safety of gross motor equipment is included in this item, safety of the equipment is covered in Item 8, Gross motor equipment. Issues related to safety of the space (not the gross motor equipment) is considered in this item. Fall zones, with required cushioning surfaces are considered part of the space (not equipment), and thus considered here. Height and velocity of falls should be considered when determining whether a fall zone with cushioning surface is needed. Anything permitted by the staff to be used for stimulating active play that could lead to a fall with serious consequences must have an adequate fall zone. Note that the requirements for verifying the resilience of materials not covered in the chart on the Playground Information Sheet (such as poured or installed foam or rubber surfaces) is as follows: the child care provider must provide written proof of meeting ASTM 1292 requirements for the material used under equipment. Although the Consumer Product Safety Commission Guidelines for cushioning surfaces and fall zones apply only to anchored equipment, for purposes of scoring, these standards should be applied to anything used for gross motor play, in which falls onto inadequate cushioning surfaces can occur. **(See All About the ECERS-R pp. 57-67 for further information.)**

Any non-gross motor equipment that is in the space (such as fences, storage sheds, air conditioning units, dramatic play structures, benches, picnic tables, water play areas) must also be assessed in this item, for safety problems they might pose, such as protrusions on low fences, obstructions in a trike path, accessibility to dangerous objects.

- 1.2 – “Very dangerous” means 1 obvious major safety hazard or 3+ minor safety hazards exist. Examples of major safety hazards are: open gate, inadequate cushioning (fall zone), entrapment, and no barrier between outdoor area and parking lot/road. Examples of minor safety hazards are: roots, sand on sidewalk, protrusions (bolts on fences/gates), and tripping hazards. Consistently inadequate surface cushioning is considered an obvious major safety hazard and should be scored “Yes”. Major hazards include: insufficient cushioning, entrapment, no fence, open gate, spaces between railings on stairs, large rocks, ants, water areas (ponds, creeks). Minor hazards include: sand on sidewalk, tripping hazards, points on fence.
- 3.1 – Some space means that indoor and/or outdoor space is used for gross motor play by the children in the group for at least 1 hour each day in a program operating 4 or more hours per day. In programs operating less than 4 hours per day, at least ½ hour is required.
- 3.2 – A space can be considered generally safe even if it cannot be easily supervised. The ability to supervise space is not considered in this item. (See Item 29 Supervision of gross motor). Consider all spaces used at any time for gross motor play including hallways, covered patios, parking lots, etc. “Generally safe” means no major safety hazards or less than 3 minor safety hazards.
- 5.1 – Classroom space or hallways can count as “some indoor space”, but only if the space is reasonably large and open (through moving furniture, if necessary). In some areas, where the climate is never extreme for long periods and a covered outdoor area can be used year-round, this can also count as some indoor space.
- 5.3 – To score this indicator, observe to see that the various activities in the gross motor space do not interfere with each other (for example, that children are not in great danger of tripping over toys as they run across the space, that children coming down a slide will not bump into anything, or that wheel toys do not usually go through areas with other types of play and “run people down”).
- 7.1 – At least one hard and one soft play surface must be accessible daily outdoors.
- 7.2 – Only one example of protection from the elements must be observed to give credit for 7.2. But the protection observed must match the most prevalent adverse conditions caused by the elements in the local area.
- 7.3 – To give credit for 7.3, at least two convenient features must be observed.

Item 8: Gross Motor Equipment

Gross motor equipment includes anything provided for or regularly permitted by the staff to be used for stimulating gross motor activity. This includes manufactured, custom-made and/or natural objects used for climbing, sliding, balancing or other gross motor activity. It does not include objects meant to be used for other purposes, such as benches to sit on, shade trees or shelves children are not supposed to climb. Consider indoor and outdoor equipment for this item.

1.2 – Consider if the equipment is broken or rusted when scoring this indicator.

1.3,

3.2 & 3.3 The safety of gross motor equipment is handled in this item, in terms of appropriateness and condition. Safety of fall zones, with cushioning surfaces, and all other hazards present in the space, are handled in Item 7, Space for gross motor play.

1.3 – “Appropriate for the age and ability of the children” takes into consideration age-appropriateness, level of ease or difficulty, **and** safety. Score “YES” if 1 or more major safety hazard or 3+ minor safety hazards exist. Examples of major safety hazards are: “S” hooks on swings, wooden or metal bats, flexible jump ropes that can be knotted or tangled, and a metal slide. Examples of minor safety hazards are: heavy balls and swinging bridges. Only count “S” hooks once when determining number of safety hazards. This indicator addresses both stationary and portable equipment. Major safety hazards include: open S-hooks on swings, wooden/metal bats, flexible jump ropes (if rope can knot), metal slide, merry-go-round. Minor safety hazards include: heavy balls, swinging bridges.

3.1– This note clarifies the requirement in the original note for this indicator. Programs operating for at least 8 hours/day must have at least 1 hour of access to gross motor equipment daily. Less time is required for programs operating less than 8 hours a day, with the amount of time calculated proportionally, based on the ratio of 1 hour for programs of 8 hours or more. **See chart provided in General Notes to determine approximate amount of time required for part-day programs. Some means that all children can have access to equipment, during the gross motor time.** Consider indoors, outdoors, or both when scoring 1-hour accessibility.

3.2 – Generally good repair means no major safety hazards or less than 3 minor safety hazards.

3.3 – In a mixed-age group, appropriate equipment must be available for the different abilities represented. Consider especially the appropriateness of the stationary equipment such as climbers, since they are permanent installations and always accessible. “Most” means 75% of the equipment is appropriate for the age and ability. This indicator addresses stationary equipment only.

5.1 – Enough means that children have interesting options for gross motor play and do not have to wait long periods of time to use the equipment they choose to use. Consider both portable and stationary equipment.

5.2 – To meet the requirement for a “variety of skills,” there should be 7-9 different skills that are obviously developed through the equipment children can use. Generally 1 piece of equipment will not provide this variety, but in the case of a very complex climber the indicator might be true. Other skills, besides those listed in the example, might include pulling/pushing, hanging by arms, swinging, jumping, hopping, using a jump rope, operating a hula hoop, tossing things into containers, catching, throwing, kicking, etc. Observe to see how many skills the equipment encourages. List them. Consider both portable and stationary equipment.

7.1 – Portable equipment means that the portability is part of the play potential for children (e.g., wheel toys, jump ropes, hula hoops, roller skates, bats, tennis rackets). Equipment that children cannot or should not move as part of play is considered stationary, even though it may not be anchored, therefore can be moved.

7.2 – Consider ages of children and what challenges them to determine whether equipment stimulates skills on different levels.

Item 9: Greeting/Departing

Consider when children enter the classroom and not the program

- 1.1 – Score “Yes” when children are usually (75% of the time) not acknowledged by staff, either verbally or non-verbally, either positively or neutrally, upon entering the classroom, or very soon after their arrival (within 1-2 minutes).
- 3.1 – Most requires that at least 75% of the children are greeted warmly, and any new staff member greets the children as well. “Warmly” means the acknowledgement of arrival is positive rather than neutral or negative. The acknowledgement can be verbal, non-verbal or a combination.
- 5.1 – Observe greeting very carefully to see if each child is actually greeted, and that the greeting is personal and positive (e.g., caregiver makes eye contact and smiles, uses child’s real name or nickname, says something to child or asks something). For suggestions on accurately assessing greeting and departing see All About the ECERS-R pp. 80-85. In this indicator the greeting must be personalized or directed to **each** specific child in some way. Examples of individual greetings: using the child’s name, greeting the child in his primary language, smiling, hugging, making eye contact, or asking the child something personal. There should be no lapses or delays. The key word is “each”. Score “No” if one child is not greeted in a personalized way.
- 5.3 – To give credit, each parent does not have to be greeted warmly during the observation, but it must be obvious that, in general (approximately 75% of the time), parents are treated in this way. In this indicator there can be some neutral greetings, but no negative interactions.

Item 10: Meals/Snacks

- 1.1 – To receive credit for this indicator, meals and snacks must be observed. Written schedules posted in the rooms are not to be used as evidence. Programs of up to 4 hours in length are required to provide one meal or a snack; of 4-6 hours require one meal; of 6-12 hours require one meal and two snacks or two meals and one snack. Children do not have to be fed every time they say they are hungry or request food. They should always have access to water or be given water on request, however.
- 1.2 & 3.2 The intent of this indicator is to determine whether the correct components of a meal or snack are being served to the children. No analysis of the nutritional value of foods served is necessary. Use the USDA Meal Guidelines – ages 1-12, in All About the ECERS-R p. 91, to determine whether the components are present. Personal dietary preferences of the assessor (e.g., whole grain vs. white breads; fresh vs. canned vegetables) are not to be used in determining the quality of the foods served. As long as the required nutritionally adequate meals and snacks are served, within the acceptable timeframe (e.g., program less than or equal to 4 hours=1 meal or snack required; 4-6 hours=1 meal; 6-12 hours=2 meals and 1 snack or 2 snacks and 1 meal; more than 12 hours=2 snacks and 2 meals) credit can be given for 3.2. Any supplementary foods served in addition to the required meals/snacks do not have to meet the required components.
- 1.2 – In programs where parents provide food for meals and snacks, they are still required to make sure food meets USDA Meal Guidelines. 75% of all meals and snacks must meet USDA Meal Guidelines to receive credit for this indicator. In programs where parents provide meals, at least 75% of the meals must meet USDA Meal Guidelines.
- 1.3 – In the case where snack time is flexible and children come and go throughout a period of time, the same sanitary conditions are required (i.e., table sanitized between children using same places, children's hands washed, etc.). If children finger feed themselves during meals, then children should have hands washed after eating also. All children and adults must follow proper handwashing procedures to receive credit for this indicator.
Tables must be sanitized before and after use. A separate cloth is required for each table, and cloths cannot be returned to soak in the bleach-water solution. No sponges. Disinfectant and/or anti-bacterial wipes do not count for sanitation purposes. Products that can be given credit as sanitizing solutions are: bleach-water solution or a commercial product that states on the label or manufacturer's product sheet that it kills 99.9% of germs or is an EPA registered product. All commercial products used for sanitizing must be used according to manufacturer's guidelines.
- 3.2 -- In programs where parents provide meals, at least 75% of the meals must meet USDA Meal Guidelines.
- 3.3 -- To give credit, sanitary conditions must be maintained at least 75% of the time.
- 3.5 -- A food/beverage substitution made in case of allergies or family dietary restrictions must meet the primary meal/snack nutrient contribution of the food/beverage it replaces. For example, in the case of milk, the substitute beverage needs to be equal in calcium and protein. Therefore, water, juice, or calcium-enriched juice is not a milk substitute since it does not replace the protein, but a vegetarian milk, such as soy milk, is. To get additional information about whether substitutes can be credited, ask staff, "How are substitutes made for foods/beverages children cannot eat?"
- 5.1 – Most requires that it is more likely for staff to be sitting with the children during meals and group snacks than not. At least one member of the classroom staff must sit with the children during meals and snacks to receive credit for this indicator
- 7.1 – When scoring this indicator, credit can be given if any example of helping is observed for younger children (2 ½ year olds and 3's), while at least three examples would be required to give credit for a group with older preschoolers (4's through kindergarten)

Item 11: Nap/Rest

Consider quiet activities such as book baskets, puzzles, and journals as nap/rest time. Children can participate in quiet activities by sitting at tables or on the floor. If children lie on the floor, they must use a mat. This item may be scored “NA” if no rest time is offered and none of the children appear to need a rest time. If it is apparent that a child (or children) needs to rest, proper sanitary provisions must be made and this item will be scored.

- 1.2 – Mats must be covered in a material that makes them easy to wash and sanitize. They must be stored separately so that sleep surfaces do not touch one another or touch the floor or the floor side of another child’s mat. Children’s bedding must be stored separately so that personal items are not touching one another. Towels are not to be considered for this indicator. If children rest directly on the floor or sitting at tables credit cannot be given for this indicator.
- 1.3 – At least one staff member that works directly with the children on a regular basis must be present and alert at all times. There can be no lapses in supervision.
- 3.2 -- “Not crowded” means the cots/mats are at least 18 inches apart, unless separated by a solid barrier. Children’s bedding must be stored separately, so that personal items are not touching one another, mats/cots must be covered with material that makes them easy to wash and sanitize.
- 7.2 – Credit can be given when children can be happily occupied by reading a book or playing quietly while on their cots.

Item 12: Toileting/Diapering

Consider all areas used for toileting (in the classroom, down the hall)

- 1.1 & 3.1 If the same sink is used by either children or adults for both diapering/toileting and food-related routines (including toothbrushing) or other purposes (to wash toys/other classroom equipment; after wiping nose), it must be sanitized by spraying sink and faucets with a bleach solution after diapering/toileting use. See All About the ECERS-R for additional information, pp. 111-114. As an exception to this rule, in order to avoid requiring children to wash hands in quick succession between toileting and being fed, the following applies: If children use toilet, wash hands and then immediately sit down for meal/snack, contamination of children's hands at toileting sink must be minimized by having children/adults turn off faucet with paper towel. Score 1.1 "No" if no major problems are observed, or only two or three minor problems.
- 1.1 – Consider the following when scoring this indicator.
- Separate sink for washing hands after toileting. This sink should not be used for any other purposes. If sink is used for other purposes, it must be sanitized.
 - Toilets must be flushed after use, sanitized, and cleaned daily. The staff must check periodically to see if toilets are flushed.
 - Toileting area must be kept clean. No trash (toilet paper, paper towels), built-up grime, or spills should be on the floor.
- Score "Yes" if the problems listed above are observed. Score "No" if only 2 or 3 minor problems are observed.
- 1.3 – Proper handwashing for staff and children is required for this indicator. See pages 114 – 115 in *All About ECERS* for proper handwashing procedures. (75%)
- 1.4 – Score "Yes" if staff do **not** monitor the supervision of children.
- 3.1 – Score "Yes" when no major problems are observed or only one minor problem is observed. Staff must be observed checking the toileting area several times to get credit for this indicator.
- 3.3 – A score of "Yes" requires that 75% of children's hands are washed and 75% of adults hands are washed. Proper handwashing for staff and children is required for this indicator. (75%)
- 3.5 – Adequate supervision means that teachers check to be sure that sanitary toilet conditions are maintained (ex. Toilets flushed, toilet paper/towels and soap provided) and ensure that children complete toileting procedures properly (ex., wipe properly, wash hands, avoid inappropriate behaviors).
- 7.1 – To be considered child-sized, toilets and sinks must be usable with no adaptations (e.g., steps), by at least 75% of children in group.

Item 13: Health Practices

This item considers health-related issues other than those required for toileting/diapering, meals/snacks, and nap/rest, which are handled in the respective items.

- 1.1 – Consider actions of the staff when scoring this indicator. Proper handwashing must be observed to receive credit. Waterless anti-bacterial hand washes (hand sanitizers) do not count for credit.
- 3.1 -- There are 4 categories of handwashing that must be tracked to score this indicator. These 4 categories are: 1) Upon arrival into classroom, and re-entering classroom after being outside, 2) Before water play or after messy play, 3) After dealing with bodily fluids or making significant skin contact, and 4) After touching contaminated objects and surfaces, such as trash can lids and pets. To score, observers should be aware of times that handwashing is carried out when needed. This means that the observer should watch (and listen). For example, observers should listen for coughing or sneezing by the children and staff, or watch for noses that need wiping to see that the proper handwashing is carried out. See All About the ECERS-R for sample tracking system p. 125. The 75% of required handwashing must be calculated separately for staff and children, but the percent should be based on the total handwashing in all categories. If either group washes hands less than 75% of the time when needed, score 3.1 “No”.
- 3.2 -- Examples for this indicator include: tissues available and used when necessary; same washcloth/towel not used for more than one child; soap available and used; toothbrushes stored to avoid contamination. “Usually take action” means 75% of the time. However, if there are any major problems, such as bodily fluid spills not cleaned up promptly or signs of animal contamination in children’s play spaces, score 3.2 “No”.
- 3.4 -- If a substantial number of these procedures are used to minimize spread of contagious diseases, give credit for this indicator. Not all examples in the indicator are required to score “Yes”. A general question such as “Do you have any health requirements for children and staff?” usually elicits the information needed to score.
- 7.2 – If the “same sink” is used for both tooth brushing and toileting, without sanitizing, consider this under item 12, Toileting/diapering. A score of “NA” is permitted for programs open six hours or less per day

Item 14: Safety Practices

- 1.1 – Score “Yes” when the observer can list two or more very serious hazards seen in indoor spaces used by the children or when more than five minor hazards (such as loose carpet edge, splinters on a shelf, or bleach-water solution stored within children’s reach) are listed. Bleach and water solution, used to sanitize surfaces, does not have to be locked away, but must be stored out of reach of young children. It should not be sprayed where it can be breathed in by children, for example, while children are seated around the table.
- Any electrical outlets or wires present where children are allowed to play must be safe (e.g., outlets covered, cords secure). When special safety outlets are used in a program, ask the teacher or director how they are operated to ensure child safety, and check to be sure operation rules are followed correctly. Flip covers on outdoor outlets are acceptable as safety caps as long as they are kept closed when not in use. If more than one outlet is not covered do not give credit. Anything that is labeled “Keep out of reach of children,” must be stored in a locked cabinet or out of the reach of children. Major hazards: raw kidney beans. Minor hazards include: macaroni used as a sand substitute, loose carpet, splinters on furniture, chemicals sprayed around children.
- 1.2 -- Score “Yes” when the observer can list two or more very serious hazards seen in the outdoor spaces used by children or if six or more minor hazards (such as tree roots that are likely to cause tripping, shallow puddles, or sand on a sidewalk) are listed during the observation. Major hazards include: insufficient cushioning, entrapment, no fence, open gate, spaces between railings on stairs, large rocks, ants, water areas (ponds, creeks). Minor hazards include: sand on sidewalk, tripping hazards, points on fence.
- 1.3 – If this is scored “Yes” then it is likely that items 29 and 30 (Supervision items) will also receive scores of 1. Note that to score this indicator “Yes”, supervision must be inadequate both indoors and outdoors. Staff must sit and watch. Consider ratios and staff positioning.

	2-3 years	3-4 years	4-5 years	5-6 years
Staff:child ratio	1:6	1:9	1:10	1:12

- 3.1 -- There must be less than six minor hazards observed.
- 5.2 -- To give credit, staff must be observed discussing or explaining safety rules.

Item 15: Books and Pictures

- 1.1 -- Score “Yes” if fewer than five intact books are accessible to the children or if the accessible books can be used for less than one hour in a full-day program of 8 hours or more, appropriately prorated using the chart in the General Notes. If a program operates between 5 and 7 hours a day, the time required would be 45 minutes. For programs operating less than 5 hours, the time required would be 30 minutes.
- 1.2 -- Score “Yes” if children are not read to at least once a day, except under unusual circumstances.
- 3.1 -- Some books accessible means that at least one book for half of the children allowed to attend at any time (e.g., 10 books for a group of 20). To give credit, books must be accessible for at least one hour per day in a program of 8 hours or more, appropriately prorated in shorter programs (See chart in General Notes for required times.) If a program operates between 5 and 7 hours a day, the time required would be 45 minutes. For programs operating less than 5 hours, the time required would be 30 minutes.
- 3.2 -- If not observed, the staff-initiated activity must be a part of the written daily schedule. This must be a regular part of the scheduled day – if not observed, look on schedule.
- 5.1 -- All accessible books do not have to be found in the book area. Be sure to look for them in other areas of the room. A “wide selection” means at least 20 books, but more will be required if there is a group of more than 15 children. Approximately 3-4 examples of each category are required, but this rule is flexible and there might be more or less of any category. However each category must be represented. See All About the ECERS-R pp. 150-152 for further information.
- 5.2 -- To give credit, the materials must be accessible at least one hour daily in a full-day program, appropriately prorated for shorter programs. See chart in General Notes for required items. If a program operates between 5 and 7 hours a day, the time required would be 45 minutes. For programs operating less than 5 hours, the time required would be 30 minutes.
- 5.4 -- If there are any books accessible to children that show violence in a graphic or frightening way, or that glorify violence, then credit cannot be given for this indicator. Check only books and pictures that are accessible to the children. Do not consider materials not meant for use with children that are stored in a teacher’s space.
- 7.1 -- Some books must be added or rotated monthly to get credit for this indicator.
- 7.2 -- Score “Yes” if 3 or more books relate to a theme studied during the past month. If themes are never changed, credit cannot be given.

Item 16: Encouraging children to communicate

- 1.2 -- Score "Yes" if almost no materials are accessible for children to use, or accessibility of the materials is limited to a very short time period of the day, so that children rarely have a chance to use materials. This does not have to be limited to free play time.
- 3.1 -- Activities used by staff to encourage children to communicate require that staff take action to draw communication from a child. During free play, for example, the teacher might ask the child to talk about what he/she is doing or making. During circle time, finger plays, songs, reciting nursery rhymes, or helping to tell a story would count towards meeting this indicator. This can be observed in group time or free play. **Four instances must be observed.**
- 3.2 -- To give credit, the materials must be accessible for at least one hour per day in a program of 8 hours or more. For programs operated less than 8 hours, see chart in General Notes to determine the approximate amount of time. If a program operates between 5 and 7 hours a day, the time required would be 45 minutes. For programs operating less than 5 hours, the time required would be 30 minutes.
- 3.3 -- Songs, poems, and/or chants, etc., with violent, sexually explicit or culturally biased content, are considered inappropriate. Score this indicator, "No" if observed in use. Children who speak a primary language that differs from that used in the class and are just learning the new language must have some opportunities to use their own language as well as the language of the majority of the group. If the child is fluent in English, credit can be given for this indicator. More than one activity must be observed.
- 7.2 -- Do not give credit for picture word labels on shelves or labels posted on other objects in the room. Also, if staff only write children's names on their work, no credit is given for this indicator, even if staff read names back to the children. For examples of linking speaking to print, see All About the ECERS-R pp. 165-167. If an example of staff linking writing to spoken language is not observed, evidence of this practice observed in the classroom may be used to give credit for this indicator. See All About the ECERS-R p. 166 for examples.

Item 17: Using Language to Develop Reasoning Skills

- 3.1 – Staff sometimes talk about logical relationships means that during the observation staff are observed making comments that relate to logical concepts at least twice.
- 3.2 – If at least two instances are observed during the observation, score “Yes”.
- 5.1 – At least one instance must be observed. See All About the ECERS-R, pp. 171, 172 for further examples.
- 5.2 – At least two instances must be observed. You may give credit for this indicator without giving credit for 5.1.
- 7.1 – To give credit for 7.1, at least two examples must be observed, that are not related to children’s use of play materials that encourage reasoning.
- 7.2 – At least two instances must be observed during the observation to give credit for this indicator.

Item 18: Informal Use of Language

- 1.1 – Score “Yes” if staff talk to children only to control their behavior and manage routines.
- 1.3 – See All About the ECERS-R, pp. 178, 179 for examples of how children’s talk is discouraged.
- 5.2 – In order to decide on a score for this indicator, consider the amount of language staff use to manage routines and control behavior in relationship to the amount of language used to exchange information and interact socially. If a far greater amount is used for information exchange and social discussion (about 75%) than for control and management, score “Yes”.
- 5.3 – Observe to see if staff use many words in response to children’s interests. When a child with restricted verbal ability points to something, if staff only name the object, do not give credit. Give credit, if in addition to the name, staff add more information, e.g., color and other properties of object, use, etc.. Credit can be given if the staff initiates the topic and then adds to what the child says in response to the question. At least two instances of expansion must be observed during the observation.
- 5.4 – Score “Yes” if encouraging communication among children is seen as a usual practice (rather than only once in a while).
- 7.1 – This indicator requires that several instances, at least three or four, be observed throughout the observation as a sample of the ongoing behavior that staff exhibit towards all children, sometime during the day. It is not necessary for the observer to make sure that every child has the experience during the observation.
- 7.2 – If questions are sometimes used to encourage longer answers, and this seems to be a regular, usual practice rather than an exception, give credit for 7.2 (score “Yes”).

Item 19: Fine Motor

- 1.1 -- Accessible daily means that children have access to materials for some time during the day.
- 1.2 -- Generally in poor repair or incomplete means 80% of materials cannot be used properly because pieces are missing, parts are broken or there are other problems.
- 3.1 -- “Some of each type” means more than one example of each of the 4 types is accessible for 1 hour in an 8 hour program, prorated appropriately in shorter programs (see General Notes for amount of time required). In order to be given credit for one example of a type, the material must be complete and in good enough condition to permit the activity for which it was designed. Therefore, crayons and paper to draw on is one example of an art material, a puzzle with all its pieces is one example of puzzles, a set of beads with strings is one example of manipulatives. For further details about the 4 types of fine motor materials see All About the ECERS-R pp. 189 & 190. If a program operates between 5 and 7 hours a day, the time required would be 45 minutes. For programs operating less than 5 hours, the time required would be 30 minutes.
- 3.2 -- Most means 80% of fine motor materials.
- 5.1 -- “Many” requires at least 3 examples of each type to be accessible for a substantial portion of the day. Many items representing each type do not all have to be accessible at the same time, however a combination of these materials need to be accessible for a substantial portion of the day to assure that children have a wide choice.
- 7.1 – To receive credit for this indicator, some materials must be rotated at least monthly.
- 7.2 – To give credit, almost all shelves and/or containers must have labels that are meaningful to the children.

Item 20: Art

- 1.1 -- Rarely available means activities with art materials are offered less than once a day, or if offered daily, all children do not have the opportunity to participate if they wish, or the time offered is too short to be satisfying to the children.
- 3.1 -- Some means at least one usable art material that will allow children to complete artwork (e.g., crayons with paper). To give credit, the materials must be accessible daily for at least 1 hour in an 8 hour program, prorated appropriately for shorter programs (see chart in General Notes). If a program operates between 5 and 7 hours a day, the time required would be 45 minutes. For programs operating less than 5 hours, the time required would be 30 minutes.
- 5.1 -- Many and varied requires that 3-5 different art materials be accessible from at least 4 of the categories for a substantial portion of the day, and drawing materials is required as 1 of the 4. All categories need not be accessible at the same time, as long as each is included for some time during the substantial portion of the day. For more information about the categories, see All About the ECERS-R, p. 200. Food cannot be counted as an art material.
- 5.2 -- Much individual expression means that 85% of the time when art materials are used, children can do “free art” and are not required to follow an example. Observe to see whether children have access to the art materials and if they actually use them in their own creative way. You may also look at the art work displayed in the room. If you see many teacher directed projects displayed, and little individual work being done by the children during the observation do not give credit for this indicator. If you are not sure, ask the teacher how often projects like those in the display are done. If projects like those in the display are done.
- 7.3 -- This indicator can be scored “NA” if all children enrolled in the classroom are under 4 years of age.

Item 21: Music/movement

- 3.1 – Some means more than one example of music materials are accessible for at least 1 hour per day in an 8 hour program, prorated appropriately for shorter programs. See General Notes for time required in shorter programs. The materials need not be accessible at the same time. If a program operates between 5 and 7 hours a day, the time required would be 45 minutes. For programs operating less than 5 hours, the time required would be 30 minutes.
- 5.1 -- To give credit for “many”, there must be enough musical instruments for at least half of the children to use at once plus some music to listen to, such as a tape player with tapes or music on a computer program that has extensive musical content, e.g., complete songs, and/or passages of music. Do not give credit for very short musical sound patterns on the computer, as found in many computer games. Dance props must be accompanied by something that makes music such as a recorded music, child-created music, or adult created music. For a tape player to be considered accessible in a group of older children (majority of children are 4 years and older) children should be able to use the tapes independently, but in younger groups help may be needed from the teacher.
- To give credit, the many music materials must be accessible for at least 1 hour daily in programs operating 8 hours or more a day to give credit for this indicator. Less time is required for programs operating less than 8 hours a day, with the amount of time calculated proportionally, based on the ratio of 1 hour for programs of 8 hours or more. See General Notes for time required for shorter programs. If a program operates between 5 and 7 hours a day, the time required would be 45 minutes. For programs operating less than 5 hours, the time required would be 30 minutes.
- 5.2 -- Various types of music means at least 3 different types. See All About the ECERS-R p. 216 for a list of types of music.
- 7.2 -- Activities must occur at least 3-4 times per year.
- 7.3 -- Creative music must be a daily (or almost daily) option to give credit.

Item 22: Blocks

Usually the block area will be found in the classroom being observed. However, in a center where there is a block area that is outside the observed classroom (such as in a multi-purpose room or outdoors), that is accessible to the children on a regular basis, this should be considered when scoring this item. Interlocking blocks (whether large or small, indoors or outdoors) are not considered in this law.

- 1.1 -- Few blocks means there are no blocks for children to use or fewer blocks than are needed for two children to each build a sizable structure (10-20 blocks depending on size).
- 3.1 -- Enough blocks means there are sufficient blocks of a specific type that can be used together to make a sizable structure. Random collections of blocks with fewer than 10-20, depending on size, of each type cannot be given credit because they are difficult to build with. To give credit, block accessories need to be within or near the block area so that it is obvious to the children that those materials are to be used with the blocks. If accessories are not stored near or with the blocks, it must be observed that children actually use the materials as block accessories. If not observed, then credit cannot be given.
- 3.3 -- To receive credit for this indicator, blocks and accessories can be reached and used by children for at least 1 hour per day in a program operating 8 hours or more. See the chart in General Notes for prorated times. If a program operates between 5 and 7 hours a day, the time required would be 45 minutes. For programs operating less than 5 hours, the time required would be 30 minutes.
- 5.1 -- This indicator requires enough blocks for 3 children to build sizable structures independently. Observe how space for block play is used. No specific square footage is required. If you don't observe children using this area then imagine how it would be used based on the size of block area, type of blocks. Also consider age and ability of children.
- 5.3 -- The block area may include other types of small and interlocking blocks considered under item 19, Fine motor, in addition to blocks, and still be given credit for being a special block area. Usually credit cannot be given if other materials, such as other fine motor toys, art, pretend play materials, or carpentry tools are included with the blocks and interfere with block play in any way. However, if there are a few hardhats or small toy houses/buildings in the block area that do not take up space, or interfere with block play, credit can be given.
- 5.4 -- All block areas considered in calculating accessibility for a substantial part of the day must meet requirements of 5.1-5.3. Additional block areas may be outdoors or in another indoor space.
- 7.2 -- When labeling block shelves, use of printed words only without the graphic representation of blocks is not given credit.
- 7.3 -- The outdoor blocks do not need to be accessible daily but should be available for the teacher to add to the other activities.

23. Sand/Water

Wood chips can be considered a substitute for sand if the material can be used in the same way as sand – that is, easily poured or dug in – and if children would not get splinters using the material.

- 3.1 -- To give credit, access does not need to be provided on a daily basis, but should be a regular part of the program, for example, at least ½ hour twice a week.
- 3.2 -- Correct this indicator to read: Some sand/water toy accessible. Some sand/water toys means that there are at least two or more toys for children to use with sand or water.
- 5.2 -- For “variety”, consider the differences among the toys that children can use. Variety is represented in toy characteristics, such as use, size, transparency level, shape, color, and these types of properties should be considered, but use of the toys is of prime importance in making a scoring decision. If only duplicates of one toy are accessible (e.g., many spoons), then the requirements for variety are not met. Variety in toys does not have to be provided all at one time – variety can be provided through regular rotation of toys. If the teacher reports that toys are rotated, ask to see the other toys, and find out how often they are rotated. If both sand and water are accessible, variety in toys must be provided for both, but the same toys can be used to meet the requirement. Number of toys accessible for play is also considered when determining “variety”. For example, when fewer children use the toys at one time, fewer toys are required for variety, as long as the toys can be used for different purposes. When more children must share, more toys of different types are needed.
- 5.3 -- For programs of 4 hours or less, the requirement of 1 hour is changed to ½ hour. For shorter programs, see Time Chart in General Notes.
- 7.1 -- Separate provisions for indoor use and outdoor use for sand and water play must be provided to give credit for this indicator. Giving credit can not depend on a teacher’s moving one provision (e.g., a sand/water table) from indoors to outdoors every day. Because of the inconvenience for the teacher and the difficulty of changing the material in the one container to allow for the provision of both sand and water, dual use of one piece of equipment is unlikely to occur often.

24. Dramatic Play

Dramatic play consists of pretending or make-believe, where children act out their own ideas about how things happen. Thus, activities used to teach children to follow specific sequences to properly complete household chores, such as table washing or silver polishing activities, are not counted to meet the requirements of this item. Children must be free to use the materials in their own way, as part of their own make-believe play, to get credit for this item.

3.2 -- If a program operates between 5 and 7 hours a day, the time required would be 45 minutes. For programs operating less than 5 hours, the time required would be 30 minutes.

5.1 -- To give credit for this indicator, there must be many general dramatic play materials, including dress-up clothes for men and women. Many general dramatic play materials means that three or more children can use the materials at one time, without undue competition, and the materials are plentiful enough to encourage more complex play. However, many dress-up clothes are not required. The dress-up clothing listed in the original note in the scale is meant to provide examples, and should not be considered requirements for specific clothing. Hats, purses and shoes count as clothing. Because children are developing gender role identity during the preschool years, they require concrete examples of dress-ups that are associated with being men or women. Thus, 2-3 gender-specific examples of dress-up items are required, (such as ties, hard hats, or shoes to represent men's clothes; purses or flowery hats for women's). More generic clothing, such as sweatshirts or running shoes, can also be provided, but these do not count as gender-specific dress-ups.

5.2 -- Materials refer to 5.1. If 5.1 is scored "No", then this indicator must be scored "No".

5.3 -- Consider small toys that children can pretend with, both indoors and outdoors, when scoring this indicator (e.g., small dolls, trucks, animals, etc.). For further discussion about dramatic play themes see All About the ECERS-R pp. 239-241.

5.4 -- Organized storage means that materials of the same type (e.g., dolls, dress-ups, cooking props, food props, etc.) are generally stored together (e.g., in containers or in furniture). Storage does not have to be perfectly neat.

7.2 -- Consider dolls of different races, cultures, ages, and abilities as props for this indicator, as well as dress-up clothes, play foods and cooking utensils representing different cultures.

25. Nature/Science

The term collections of natural objects requires that there are groups of similar objects, that can be classified together. For example, look for a collection of seashells, fall seeds, leaves, pine cones. Sufficient numbers of the objects in each collection must be present to allow children to explore similarities and/or differences. The collections must be of natural things; plastic collections (e.g., insects, zoo animals) are counted as science/nature toys. Collections must be accessible to the children if they are to count towards meeting indicator 5.2, requiring a substantial portion of the day.

- 3.2 -- Accessible means at least 1 hour for 8 hour programs. Less time is required for programs operating less than 8 hours a day, with the amount of time calculated proportionally (see General Notes for chart to determine required time). If a program operates between 5 and 7 hours a day, the time required would be 45 minutes. For programs operating less than 5 hours, the time required would be 30 minutes.
- 5.1 -- "Many" means approximately 3-5 examples of 3 categories of nature/science materials. However, this can vary, as long as 3 of the 4 categories are represented. In some cases you might give credit for more than 3-5 of one type and less than 3-5 of another. This will also depend on the ages and number of children in the group. For a description of each of the 4 categories of nature/science materials see All About the ECERS-R pp. 253-256.
- 5.2 -- Consider materials both indoors and outdoors when calculating accessibility for a substantial portion of the day. Requirements for 5.1 must be met in order to give credit for 5.2. If outdoor time is included in calculating substantial portion of the day, materials from at least 2 categories must be accessible during outdoor time.
- 5.4 -- Must observe one example or see clear evidence (i.e., pictures, drawings). For examples of everyday events see All About the ECERS-R pp. 259-260.

26. Math/Number

- 1.2 -- “Primarily taught through rote counting or worksheets” means that such experiences make up the vast majority of children’s math/number learning opportunities.
- 3.1 -- The types of materials (listed in the note for clarification in the book) are: “counting, measuring, comparing quantities, recognizing shapes, becoming familiar with written numbers.” Look around the room carefully to find math materials because they might not be organized into a center. Some means at least 2 different materials from at least 3 of the 5 types listed. For a list of examples of the categories of math materials see All About the ECERS-R pp. 267-269.
- 3.2 -- Accessible daily means that the math/number materials credited in 3.1 can be reached and used by children for at least 1 hour per day in an 8 hour program (see General Notes to determine required time for programs operating less than 8 hours). If 3.1 is scored “No”, then this indicator must be scored “No”. If a program operates between 5 and 7 hours a day, the time required would be 45 minutes. For programs operating less than 5 hours, the time required would be 30 minutes.
- 5.1 -- “Many” means approximately 3-5 of each type. However, this can vary, as long as most types are represented. In some cases you might give credit for more than 3-5 of one type and less than 3-5 of another. This will also depend on the ages and number of children in the group. Credit should be given for materials obviously designed for math learning (e.g., puzzle with graduated sizes or different shapes, pegboard with number printed and holes to match, balance scale with things to weigh, nested cups that require size recognition). To give credit for more generic materials (blocks, beads for stringing, sets of bears with many pieces) it must be observed that the materials are used for math learning.
- 5.3 -- In order to give credit for well organized and in good condition, about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the materials that are accessible should meet this standard.
- 5.4 -- The intent of this indicator is for adults to link math and numbers to practical life events in the children’s daily schedule. Therefore, look for use of numbers during meals or getting ready for meals (such as setting the table), transition times, using a timer to take turns, counting who is absent, etc. Do not count play activities such as number games or computer games in determining the score for this indicator. “Number talk” or number experiences as part of practical life events should be observed more than once during the observation to give credit for this indicator. For examples of number talk see All About the ECERS-R pp. 272 & 273.
- 7.1 -- For a list of activities see All About the ECERS-R pp. 273 & 274.

27. Use of TV, Video, and/or Computers

Be sure to judge the appropriateness of videos or games brought from children's homes, if these materials are used with the group of children. Ask staff if any requirements of appropriateness are considered when materials are brought from home. Ask if staff is familiar with content of materials before allowing use in the program. If TV/video are used very infrequently, less than once a month, and only for relatively short periods during which all children are interested, mark this item N/A. However, even if TV is used infrequently, but for longer periods at a time, causing problems for the children, score the item as written.

- 1.1 & 3.1 To judge whether materials are non-violent and culturally sensitive, consider the content of the materials. Unfortunately, many children's videos or TV programs contain violence and are therefore inappropriate even though they have been created for the children's market. This may include some natural wildlife productions and cartoons.
- 3.2 -- This indicator requires that two or more alternative activities are accessible for children to choose while the television (including video) or computer is being used.
- 3.3 -- The intent of this indicator is to ensure that children participate in play in which they can actively be creative, imaginative, and have hands-on experiences with real materials rather than spending inordinate amounts of time watching TV or playing computer games. The amount of time given in the example is a general indication of a required time limitation and can vary. When deciding whether adequate limits are set on amount of time children can use the computer, consider not just how long each child's turn is, but also the number of turns each child is allowed to have, and if children spend time watching others at the computer. Computer time should be relatively short, compared to other activities.
- 5.1 -- Materials that are developed specifically to enhance children's learning and understanding are considered to be more educational and "good for children". For examples see All About the ECERS-R p. 282.

28. Promoting Acceptance of Diversity

- 1.3 -- Score “Yes” only if there is obvious, deliberate, and repeated prejudice shown. Do not score “Yes” if one isolated example of “politically incorrect” or “culturally insensitive behavior” is observed i.e., teacher asks children to “sit Indian style”. However, in order to sensitize the staff, any such instance should be mentioned, for example in technical assistance associated with the scales.
- 3.1 -- “Some” means at least one example of racial diversity and at least one example of cultural diversity are present and easily seen by the children in the classroom used by the group most of the day.
- 3.2 -- If stereotyping or violence is shown with regard to any group, such as some “Cowboy and Indian” toys, then this indicator should be scored “No”. Gender equity should also be considered here. Portrayals of men/boys doing traditionally male activities and women/girls doing traditionally female activities are acceptable. However, do not give credit if gender stereotyping is portrayed negatively in any way. Look for problems that would be easily obvious to the children. It is not necessary to search avidly for negative examples. When historical cultural traditions are represented, the images must be balanced with non-traditional modern representations. For example, if traditional African tribal cultures are represented in materials then current representations must also be included.
- 5.1 -- For this indicator, many books, many pictures, and many materials are required, and all categories of diversity listed need to be included to some degree. However, many examples of each category are not required. Materials must be located in spaces children use for a substantial portion of the day. Materials located in spaces used only for relatively short periods (e.g., hallways, entry way, lunch room, early AM or late PM classroom) are not counted to meet the requirements of this indicator.
- 5.2 -- To give credit, more than 2 examples must be observed to be accessible either indoors or outdoors, and obvious to the children. Examples include different kinds of dolls, puppets and block/dramatic play people, dress-up clothes, foods eaten and cooking utensils from different cultures. To receive credit for this indicator, at least one item from two or more different examples listed in All About the ECERS-R p. 293 must be observed.

Item 29: Supervision of Gross Motor Activities

To score this item, all teachers supervising gross motor activities and all children of similar age/abilities as those in the group you are observing. Notice whether adults are supervising the most hazardous areas/activities adequately.

- 1.1 -- The example in this indicator, of children being left unattended even for a short period of the time, means that no adult is present to supervise children.

	2-3 years	3-4 years	4-5 years	5-6 years
Staff:child ratio	1:6	1:9	1:10	1:12

- 1.2 -- “Most” means over 50% of all interactions during gross motor times, including both verbal and nonverbal.
- 3.1 – To give credit for this indicator, staff positioning and configuration of area, must be considered. Ratios by themselves shall not be considered for this indicator.
- 3.2 – Some positive staff-child interactions means that most exchanges are either neutral or positive, and at least 2 positive instances must be observed. To give credit, most interactions cannot be negative.
- 5.2 – “Most staff-child interactions” means that the vast majority of verbal and non-verbal interactions are positive. Neutral interactions must be outweighed by positive and helpful interactions. There may be one or two slightly negative interactions but no extremely negative ones observed.
- 5.3 – To give credit for this indicator, at least one creditable example must be seen during the observation, and if children obviously need help frequently, more examples should be observed.
- 7.1 -- At lease one example must be observed to give a score of “Yes”.
- 7.2 – To give credit for this indicator, staff must bring out or help children find materials that they need for successful play. If there is an obvious need for additional materials/equipment during the observation, but staff do not bring them out for the children to use, score this indicator “No”.
- 7.3 – To give credit for this indicator, one or more instances must be observed.

Item 30: General Supervision of Children (other than gross motor)

This item relates only to supervision required to protect the basic health and safety needs of children. Scoring this item is based only on what is observed.

	2-3 years	3-4 years	4-5 years	5-6 years
Staff:child ratio	1:6	1:9	1:10	1:12

- 1.1 – Score this indicator “Yes” if children leave the room at any time unsupervised, (i.e., going to the bathroom down the hall, going to the office)
- 1.2 & 3.3 Most supervision means the majority (over 50%) of supervision that has been observed.
- 3.1 – Consider staff positioning when scoring this indicator.
- 5.3 – Consider staff scanning the room, staff positioning, and staff intervening to prevent problems or to give help. This indicator does not include handwashing.

Item 31: Discipline

- 1.3 -- Score "Yes" if 75% of the expectations are inappropriate.
- 3.3 -- Score "Yes" if 75% of the expectations are appropriate.
- 7.2 -- To give credit the activities must be done regularly enough to have an impact on the children's understanding – at least once a week.
- 7.3 – In most cases "other professionals" means someone from outside the program that specializes in the area of concern.

Item 32: Staff-child Interactions

- 1.2 -- Score this indicator "Yes" only if many unpleasant interactions are observed throughout the observation or during part of the observation. If only one or two brief instances are observed, and most interactions are neutral or positive, score "No".
- 3.1 -- Score "Yes" if staff, on average, show warm and supportive responses to the children. This means that there is very little ignoring of children or responding to them in a neutral or negative way.
- 5.2 -- To score "Yes" staff must show throughout the observation that they accept children for who they are and treat them politely and kindly, showing that each child is important. This must be consistently observed across all children, with only minor lapses, if any.
- 5.3 -- Sympathetic response means that staff notice and validate a child's feelings, even if the child is showing emotions that are often considered unacceptable, such as anger or impatience. The feelings should be accepted although inappropriate behaviors, such as hitting or throwing things, should not be allowed. A sympathetic response should be provided in most, but not necessarily, all cases. If children are able to solve minor problems themselves, then teacher response is not needed. The observer needs to get an overall impression of the response of the staff. If minor problems persist and are ignored or if staff responds in an unsympathetic manner, give no credit for this indicator.

Item 33: Interactions among children

- 1.1 – In scoring this indicator, consider the daily schedule, the environment, and the staff.
- 3.2 – If negative interactions are major and recurring (causing a lot of hurt to a child) and frequently ignored or missed, then credit cannot be given for this indicator.
- 7.2 – Give credit for this indicator if staff can give examples of such activities that happen at least once a week.

Item 34: Schedule

In scoring this item, consider the time when the majority of children enter and leave the classroom. (Refer to the written daily schedule.)

- 3.2 – The written schedule must be posted in the room to get credit; outside the door is not acceptable.
- 3.3 -- Both the indoor and outdoor play periods must each equal at least 1 hour in length for programs operating 8 hours or more. See General Notes for programs operating less than 8 hours a day. If a program operates between 5 and 7 hours a day, the time required would be 45 minutes. For programs operating less than 5 hours, the time required would be 30 minutes.
- 5.3 -- In scoring this indicator, do not consider routine care times and times when children are passively engaged.
- 5.4 – “Long period of waiting” means waiting without any activity for 3 minutes or more between daily events (e.g., running around aimlessly, whole group sitting at tables waiting for lunch, waiting in line to go out or to use the bathroom). Note that this indicator refers to waiting between transitions from one activity to another, rather than waiting within any activity.
- 7.2 – Score “Yes” if variation in the schedule, to meet the needs of one or more children, is observed.

Item 35: Free Play

- 1.1 -- Little opportunity for free play means that children can participate in free play for less than 1 hour daily for programs operating 8 hours or more. Unsupervised free play means that children choose activities and playmates and spend time with the different types of play, but staff are relatively uninvolved in supervising the children. Score "Yes" if either of the situations described above occurs during the observation, or if, during the questioning time, the staff report such a situation.
- 3.1 -- Free play or free choice does not require that all areas are open for children's choice. The number of centers may be limited as long as the children may choose where, with what and with whom they play. To give credit, children must be able to participate in free play for at least 1 hour daily in programs operating 8 hours or more. The 1 hour may take place at one time, or be a combination of times throughout the day. See General Notes for time required for programs operating less than 8 hours a day. If a program operates between 5 and 7 hours a day, the time required would be 45 minutes. For programs operating less than 5 hours, the time required would be 30 minutes.
- 3.2 -- This indicator assesses whether children are supervised to minimize major hazards to their health and safety during free play, indoors and out, but does not apply to routine or other supervision (e.g., children are supervised so that they do not play with matches or swallow poisons, etc.). Do not score "No" unless supervision during free play is extremely lax.
- 5.3 -- There should usually be at least three to five choices of different things to use within each of the types of materials/equipment provided, however some types of activities may have fewer choices.
- 7.2 -- To receive credit for this indicator, materials should be added at least once a month.

Item 36: Group Time

- 1.1 -- Whole group generally means all the children in the class. However, if a very large group is broken into 2 large groups, and the children in each group must participate in the same activity, consider this a whole group time. "Kept together as whole group most of the day" means 75% of the time the children are in the program.
- 3.2 -- Credit cannot be given for this indicator if membership in the small groups is determined by the staff. Some opportunity requires that children have the chance to participate in one or more self-selected groups at least one time during the day.
- 5.1 -- This indicator requires that the group time be acceptable for all children required to participate, not just some or most of them. If any child has significant problems with the time required for whole group, and this is not handled positively by staff (for example, by allowing the child to leave the group and do another activity or shortening the whole group time), then credit cannot be given for this indicator.
- 5.2 -- To give credit for "many", at least half of the play activities observed should be completed in small groups or individually.
- 7.2 -- To give credit for this indicator, the assessor must observe to get a general impression of what the children experience. One staff might be stronger in educational interaction than another, but if the stronger teacher is strong enough, credit can be given.
- 7.3 -- To give credit for this indicator, the observer must see several examples of such groupings, lasting for a reasonable period of time during the observation. In addition, there must be evidence that such groupings are a usual part of the remaining unobserved day (either through teacher report or an accurate schedule that provides the needed information).

Item 37: Provisions for Children with Disabilities

Note that this item is scored only if there is a child in the group with an identified and diagnosed disability, with a completed assessment. If the diagnosis and assessment have not been completed on the child, (or if there is no child with a disability included in the classroom) score this item N/A. If the child is receiving services, this can be accepted as evidence that a diagnosis and assessment exist. Existence of an IEP/IFSP is not required to score this item. To ensure privacy for families, the teacher need not point out the child or tell the observer about the particulars of the disability. As you question the teacher about how the identified child's special needs are handled, you do not need to know which child is being discussed.

- 1.1 -- This indicator is scored "Yes" when program staff report that a child meeting the requirements identified in All About the ECERS-R, pp. 389-390 is enrolled in the class being observed, and staff report that they do not try to find out assessment information and know nothing about the child's special needs or the results of the formal assessment. No one (such as parents) has communicated the necessary information to the staff, nor has staff attempted to find out about the assessment.
If staff report that they are aware of the diagnosis, but have not had the opportunity to talk with parents or to find out about the assessment, then score this indicator "Yes".
- 1.3 -- If no communication takes place between parents and staff, about what the child's disability requires, and how to best meet the special needs of the child, score this indicator "Yes". Even if staff have put significant effort into encouraging parental involvement, if such efforts are unsuccessful, the indicator is still scored "Yes".
- 3.3 -- Score "Yes" if parents show up to IEP meeting and/or signed IEP.
- 5.3 -- To give credit for this indicator, informal communication must take place daily or almost daily.

Item 38: Provisions for Parents

- 1.2 -- Examples of discouraging parents are: telling parents that their child will adjust more quickly if they do not visit, requiring appointments for classroom visits, and limiting visits to certain times or days.
- 3.1 -- If parents' primary language is other than English, assistance must be given to ensure they receive the information and are clear about the content.
- 3.3 -- At least two different types of possibilities must be offered. See All About the ECERS-R p.403 for examples.
- 3.4 -- To receive credit for this indicator, no strongly negative interaction can be observed or reported.
- 5.2 -- To score this indicator, look at documents provided to parents such as the parent handbook, to decide whether the required information is provided.
- 5.3 -- At least one ongoing print communication material, in addition to a parent handbook, and two face-to-face communication opportunities, such as a planned individual conference and a parent meeting, are required in addition to daily informal communication to give for this indicator.
- 5.4 -- At least three alternatives are required to give credit for this indicator.
- 7.1 -- To give credit for this indicator, evidence must be present that a formal parent evaluation is requested from parents at least once a year. Staff should be able to show the evaluation form and describe the process.
- 7.2 -- Credit can also be given if no referrals have ever been required or made, but staff show that they are willing and well informed to provide this service.
- 7.3 -- Score this indicator "Yes" if it is reported that any parents are currently involved on advisory boards or in other decision-making roles. To give credit, the parents do not have to have a child in the classroom being observed, but they must have a child currently enrolled in the program. Examples of parent involvement in decision-making process: PTA/PTO, School Improvement Council, Parent Advisory Committee.

Item 39: Provisions for Personal Needs of Staff

At a minimum, a 15-minute break for every 3 hours worked in the classroom should be provided to staff.

- 1.1 -- No special areas for staff means **no** space, separate from that used by the children, is available for staff to use when meeting their personal needs.
- 1.2 -- If classroom staff report having **no** breaks at all, including no break for a meal for full-time staff, then score this indicator “Yes.”
- 3.1 -- To receive credit for this indicator, fixtures in the restroom must be adult-sized.
- 3.2 -- To score this indicator “Yes,” the adult-sized furniture for staff may be in the program office or in the entry lobby if there is no teacher lounge, **but it cannot be located in the children’s classroom.**
- 3.3 -- At this minimal level, only the space is required, but no specifications are included as to the adequacy of the provision. Thus, using a hook in the classroom or a drawer in the director’s office, even though it is not convenient or private, meets this indicator.
- 3.4 -- To score this indicator “Yes,” staff must each have at least one break of 15 minutes.
- 5.1 -- It must be clear that staff may use this area as a lounge in order to score this indicator “Yes.”
- 5.2 -- Storage is considered convenient only if it does not require the staff to leave the classroom or neglect the care of the children to get their belongings. Storage is considered safe only if staff can lock their belongings away. Examples of security provisions are: cabinets that can be locked, classroom doors that can be locked. Credit can be given if staff feel comfortable and do not feel they need to lock their belongings.
- 5.3 -- Breaks of 15 minutes in the morning and afternoon and a ½ hour midday lunch break are required to meet this indicator for any staff who work at least 8 hours per day. Breaks can be combined as long as the minimum time requirements are met. If teachers prefer to leave early rather than taking breaks, then score this indicator “Yes.”
- 7.2 -- To receive credit for this indicator the furniture should be serviceable, clean, and generally in good enough repair to cause no major problems. Before scoring, be sure to observe the furniture in the staff lounge.

Item 40: Provision for Professional Needs of Staff

- 1.1 -- The phone does not have to be located in the classroom, but it must be readily accessible. Score this indicator "Yes" only if there is no telephone, or the telephone is difficult for classroom staff to access.
- 1.2 -- Storage space in the room, such as high open shelves or closed cabinets not accessible to children, count as storage for staff professional needs, if appropriate materials are stored there. Also, any other storage space in other parts of the facility, for example, file cabinets in an office or in a reasonably accessible closet, may count as storage for professional needs of staff, **if such materials are stored there**. Storage space for routine care supplies such as juice, paper cups, and paper towels, does not count to meet this indicator.
- 1.3 -- The space does not have to be used solely for conferences, but dual use should not interfere with the privacy or concentration required for an individual conference. Score this indicator "Yes" only if **no** space is available while children are in attendance.
- 3.1 -- To give credit for this indicator, there must be a phone in the classroom for emergency calls or brief conversations with parents. A cell phone is acceptable if it is accessible to all staff in the classroom.
- 3.2 -- **Both** some file space and some storage for other materials is required to score this indicator "Yes."
- 5.1 -- Access to ample file and storage space means there is a large enough space to comfortably store professional materials of classroom staff without the crowding of or disorganization caused by insufficient space.
- 5.2 -- To give credit office must be on-site.
- 5.3 -- Satisfactory space for individual conferences means that the space provides both visual and auditory privacy; is protected from interruptions; contains adult-sized furniture; is relatively easy to schedule for conferences, even if space is used for other purposes at other times. Satisfactory space for adult group meetings means there is enough space for the number of adults in the group; there are enough adult-sized chairs, tables, and other furniture needed for the meeting; it is relatively easy to schedule group meetings, even if the space is used for other purposes at other times.
- 7.1 -- Well-equipped office space means that the office has the necessary equipment to conduct the administrative functions of the program efficiently. Examples of such equipment include a telephone, an answering machine that takes messages 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, the furniture needed for office work, a photocopier, sufficient computer capacity, and a fax machine. To score this indicator "Yes," all examples listed are not required. However, the basic necessities for efficient program operations are required, including a telephone with answering machine, office furniture, and basic office supplies.

Item 41: Staff Interaction and Cooperation

If there is only one staff member with a group all day, this item may be scored “NA.” In addition to observing how staff communicate and get along with one another, questions must be asked of classroom staff to get the information needed to decide on a score for this item.

- 1.1 -- Score this indicator “Yes” only if **no** child-related information is communicated in any way, verbally or in writing, among staff.
- 1.2 -- The information needed to be score this indicator must be based on observation.
- 1.3 -- This indicator should be scored “Yes” only if problems are observed.
- 1.3, 3.3
7.2 Staff duties shared fairly means that all staff are busily involved on assigned tasks and the work gets done. For further 5.3 & discussion of sharing of duties see All About the ECERS-R, p. 423.
- 3.1 -- Health-related information, such as about allergies or medications, must be written and communicated to all staff and substitutes. Other information of immediate concern, such as a child needing to leave early, can be communicated verbally or in writing.
- 3.2 -- To score “Yes,” this indicator requires only that the interactions are neutral and do not interfere by being too friendly and social or hostile.
- 3.3 -- The skills and job description of each staff member should also be considered here. Score this indicator “Yes” if staff seem to be similarly involved, not necessarily both doing the same tasks, but putting out a similar amount of effort to meet the needs of the group being observed.
- 5.1 -- Note that this indicator requires daily communication of child-related information and that all children need to be considered, but not each child each day. This may be done verbally or in writing.
- 5.2 -- This indicator must be based on observation. No negative interactions can be observed to receive credit for this indicator.
- 5.3 -- This indicator must be based on observation. Score “No” only if it is obvious that care and play activities suffer because work is not properly shared by staff.
- 7.1 -- To receive credit for this indicator, the planning time must occur when all staff is free of caregiving responsibilities.
- 7.2 -- This indicator is based on observation and interview.
- 7.3 -- Credit can be given if classroom staff report that the administration encourages some social event at least two times a year.

Item 42: Supervision and evaluation of staff

It is best to obtain the information to score this item from the classroom staff member who is being supervised rather than from the supervisor. However, if the classroom staff member states that she/he does not know whether staff are supervised, then ask the director of the program.

- 1.1 -- Score this indicator "Yes" only if **no** supervision is provided.
- 3.1 -- At this level, supervision for any reason is acceptable as long as staff are working with children.
- 3.2 -- To receive credit for this indicator, feedback may be done verbally or in writing and may be fairly general.
- 5.1 -- To receive credit for this indicator, the observation should be of sufficient length (at least 1-3 hours) and done at a time when the children are awake and active. All staff members should receive an annual (once a year) supervisory observation. Score this indicator "No" if some, but not all, classroom staff members are observed, if the observation is less than 1 hour in length, or if it is completed less than yearly.
- 5.2 -- Base the score for this indicator on the answers given by the classroom staff. However, if classroom staff have been employed a relatively short time and have not had a supervisory observation, the administrative staff should be asked to explain their procedures and to show an example of a written evaluation done within the past 12 months for another staff member in the facility.
- 5.3 -- To receive credit for this indicator, strengths and weaknesses must be included.
- 5.4 -- NA is permitted only if no problems have been identified, and therefore no changes are needed.
- 7.1 -- Score this indicator "Yes" if self-evaluation is part of the annual supervisory evaluation.
- 7.2 -- To receive credit for this indicator, observations and feedback are provided about every other month.

Item 43: Opportunities for Professional Growth

Get information to score this item from the classroom staff, unless the staff state that they do not know. Then ask the supervisor.

- 1.1 -- Score this indicator "Yes" only if classroom staff who have been employed for six weeks or longer report that they have not received any basic information about the program including emergency, health, and safety procedures
- 3.1 -- Basic orientation must take place within 6 weeks after the start of employment including emergency, health, and safety procedures, in order to give credit.
- 3.2 -- In-service training, which classroom staff are required to attend, must be provided at least once a year in order to give credit.
- 3.3 -- Staff meetings, in which all classroom staff are expected to attend, must be held at least two times a year by the director and/or administrative staff in order to get credit.
- 5.1 -- To receive credit for this indicator, orientation must be a minimum of 16 hours.
- 5.2 -- In-service training, which classroom staff are required to attend, must be provided at least two times a year, either on-site or in community workshops.
- 5.3 -- To receive credit for this indicator, each staff meeting must include at least one activity that adds to the competence of the staff, such as: staff member gives a book report on a new professional book that has been added to the center's library, and other staff ask questions and discuss; a staff member shares some practical ideas she/he has tried from a course they are taking on a curriculum topic.
- 5.4 -- "Some" means that at least 25 books, pamphlets, or AV materials in good condition are available to staff.
- 7.1 -- To score "Yes" at least two ongoing provisions yearly for support should be described by classroom staff.
- 7.2 -- Current materials are books that have been published within the last 10 years and journals and magazines from the past 2 years. Books, such as the works of Piaget and Erikson, are exceptions, since they are classics on which many of our current ideas are based. The library should contain at least 60 books and 3 series of periodicals (magazines and journals) that belong to the center. The library should have a balanced collection of books on a variety of early childhood subjects including: curriculum and activity books containing practical classroom ideas for children of the ages enrolled in the center; books and articles on child development theory and practice (e.g., ages and stages, discipline, language development); materials on working with families, diversity, or inclusion. Ask to see the library to decide on a score for this indicator.
- 7.3 -- "NA" is permitted for this indicator if all staff have an AA degree or higher. Give credit if the center has a policy requiring staff with less than an AA degree to continue their formal education.

Meal Guidelines – Ages 1-12

Source: Child and Adult Care Food Program, USDA Food and Nutrition Service

Updated 05/28/03

BREAKFAST

Food Components	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-5	Ages 6-12 ¹
1 serving milk fluid milk	½ cup	¾ cup	1 cup
1 serving fruit/ vegetable juice ² , fruit and/or vegetable	¼ cup	½ cup	½ cup
1 serving grains/bread ³ bread or Cornbread, biscuit, roll or muffin, or Cold dry cereal or Hot cooked cereal or Pasta, noodles or grains	½ slice ½ serving ¼ cup ¼ cup ¼ cup	½ slice ½ serving 1/3 cup ¼ cup ¼ cup	1 slice 1 serving ¾ cup ½ cup ½ cup

LUNCH OR SUPPER

Food Components	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-5	Ages 6-12 ¹
1 serving milk fluid milk	½ cup	¾ cup	1 cup
2 servings fruit/vegetable juice ² , fruit and/or vegetable	¼ cup	½ cup	¾ cup
1 serving grains/bread ³ bread or Cornbread, biscuit, roll or muffin, or Cold dry cereal or Hot cooked cereal or Pasta, noodles or grains	½ slice ½ serving ¼ cup ¼ cup ¼ cup	½ slice ½ serving 1/3 cup ¼ cup ¼ cup	1 slice 1 serving ¾ cup ½ cup ½ cup
1 serving meat/meat alternate meat, poultry or fish ⁴ , or alternate protein product or cheese or egg or cooked dry beans or peas, or peanut or other nut or seed butters or nuts and/or seeds ⁵ or yogurt ⁶	1 oz. 1oz. 1 oz. ½ ¼ cup 2 Tbsp. ½ oz. 4 oz.	1 ½ oz. 1 ½ oz. 1 ½ oz. ¾ 3/8 cup 3 Tbsp. ¾ oz. 6 oz.	2 oz. 2 oz. 2 oz. 1 ½ cup 4 Tbsp. 1 oz. 8 oz.

SNACK *(Must be 2 of the 4 components)*

Food Components	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-5	Ages 6-12¹
1 serving milk fluid milk	½ cup	¾ cup	1 cup
1 serving fruit/vegetable juice ² , fruit and/or vegetable	¼ cup	½ cup	¾ cup
1 serving grains/bread³ bread or Cornbread, biscuit, roll or muffin, or Cold dry cereal or Hot cooked cereal or Pasta, noodles or grains	½ slice ½ serving ¼ cup ¼ cup ¼ cup	½ slice ½ serving 1/3 cup ¼ cup ¼ cup	1 slice 1 serving ¾ cup ½ cup ½ cup
1 serving meat/meat alternate meat, poultry or fish ⁴ , or alternate protein product or cheese or egg or cooked dry beans or peas, or peanut or other nut or seed butters or nuts and/or seeds ⁵ or yogurt ⁶	½ oz. ½ oz. ½ oz. ½ 1/8 cup 1 Tbsp. ½ oz. 2 oz.	½ oz. ½ oz. ½ oz. ½ 1/8 cup 1 Tbsp. ½ oz. 2 oz.	1 oz. 1 oz. 1 oz. ½ ¼ cup 2 Tbsp. 1 oz. 4 oz.

Footnotes

- 1 Children age 12 and older may be served larger portions based on their greater food needs. They may not be served less than the minimum quantities listed in this column.
- 2 Fruit or vegetable juice must be full-strength. Juice cannot be counted as the second snack-item if the other snack-item is milk
- 3 Breads and grains must be made from whole-grain or enriched meal or flour. Cereal must be whole-grain or enriched or fortified.
- 4 A serving consists of the edible portion of cooked lean meat or poultry or fish.
- 5 Nuts and seeds may meet only one-half of the total meat/meat alternate serving and must be combined with another meat/meat alternate to fulfill the lunch or supper requirement.
- 6 Yogurt may be plain or flavored, unsweetened or sweetened.

Playground Information to Use with the Environment Rating Scales

Based on information from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, Handbook for Public Playground Safety, Pub. No. 325. These guidelines are a basic overview of areas to review when scoring playground and safety items in the ECERS-R, ITERS-R, FDCRS, or SACERS. This list is not to be used as a comprehensive guide for playground assessment.

Catch Points and Protruding Hardware – There should be no dangerous pieces of hardware, such as protruding bolt ends and narrow gaps in metal connections or open "S" hooks at the top and bottom of swings. Exposed hardware can cut children, puncture skin, or catch clothing drawstrings, which could strangle a child. The top of fences less than 4 feet in height also should be checked for protrusions.

Entrapment – Children can get trapped and strangle in openings where they can fit their bodies but not their heads through the space. Therefore openings in guardrails, spaces between platforms, between ladder rungs, and uprights in protective barriers, should measure less than 3.5 inches or more than 9 inches. However, if the ground is the bottom edge of a space between 3.5 inches and 9 inches, it is not considered an entrapment hazard because the child will not be in danger of choking.

Pinch, Crush, Shearing, and Sharp Hazards – Equipment should not have sharp points or edges that could cut skin. Moving pieces of equipment, such as suspension bridges, track rides, merry-go-rounds, or seesaws, should not have accessible moving parts that might crush or pinch a child's finger or other body part.

Protective Barriers – A protective barrier is an enclosing device around an elevated platform that is intended to prevent both inadvertent falls from the platform and deliberate attempts to pass through the barrier. In other words, children should not be able to jump over it or move through it. For preschoolers, full protective barriers are preferred because they provide more protection from falls. Protective barriers are required for platforms that are over 30 inches above the ground. The top surface of the barrier should be at least 29 inches above the platform. No child should be able to climb over, under or through the barrier. For equipment used *only* by school-aged children, including 5-year-olds, any platform more than 48 inches above the ground requires protective barriers. The top surface of the protective barrier must be at least 38 inches high.

Guardrails – A guardrail is an enclosing device around an elevated platform that is intended to prevent inadvertent falls from the platform. A child might be able to climb over, under or through the guardrail. For preschoolers through 4 years of age, guardrails prevent falls from elevated platforms that are higher than 20 inches, and up to 30 inches, above the ground. For preschoolers through 4 years of age, the top surface of the guardrails should be at least 29 inches above the platform, and the lower edge should be no more than 23 inches above the platform. For equipment used *only* by school-aged children, including 5-year-olds, any platform more than 30 inches above the ground (but not over 48 inches above the ground) will need guardrails at least 38 inches above the platform, with the lower edge no more than 28 inches above the platform. When mixed age groups of preschool- and school-aged children use the same equipment (e.g., 4- and 5-year-olds) the most stringent requirements are applied to ensure safety for all. For example, platforms used by the group will require protective barriers, rather than guardrails if they reach the height listed for preschoolers.

Guardrails and barriers must be of the height required for school-aged children, which is higher than required for preschoolers. Platforms that are layered on equipment, (e.g., one platform leading up to another in a step-like manner), so that it would be impossible for preschoolers to fall more than 20 inches from one level to another (or school-aged children to fall 30 inches to another platform) do not require barriers or guardrails if they would interfere with the intended use of the equipment (e.g., stepping up to the next level).

Tripping Hazards – There should be no exposed concrete footings, abrupt changes in surface elevations, tree roots, tree stumps, or rocks, which can trip children or adults.

Protective Surfacing – The surfaces under and around play equipment should be soft enough to cushion falls, which are the most frequent causes of injuries on playgrounds. For specifics on depth of material, see the chart below. When the surfacing in much used areas becomes displaced (e.g., under swings, slides) it should be raked back or replaced to maintain correct depth.

Fall Zones – Resilient surfacing shall extend beyond the external limits of stationary equipment for a minimum of 6 feet. Swings shall have resilient surfacing that extends 2 times the length of the pivot point to the surface below. The surfacing shall be to the front and rear of the swing. Tot swings shall have resilient surfacing that extends 2 times the length of the pivot point to the bottom of the swing seat, both in the front and rear of the swing. Tot swings are defined as swings with enclosed seats. Tire swings shall have resilient surfacing that extends a distance of 6 feet plus the measurement from the pivot point to the swing seat and 6 feet to the side of the support structure.

Equipment Spacing – Play structures should be spaced at least 12 feet apart to allow children space to circulate around or fall without striking another structure. Moving pieces of equipment should be located in an area away from other play structures so children have adequate room to pass from one play area to another without being struck by a moving swing or by another child exiting from a slide.

Critical Heights of Playground Equipment for Various Types and Depths of Resilient Surfaces

Based on Information from the U.S. CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION (CPSC Publication No.325), Handbook for Public Playground Safety. When no requirement is provided for a specific height of equipment, we have used the requirement for the next higher height, so requirements are conservative, erring on the side of safety.

	Wood Chips	Double Shredded Bark	Uniform Wood Chips	Fine Sand	Coarse Sand	Fine Gravel
Equip. Height	**Uncompressed Depths of Materials in Fall Zone					
Five feet or less	6 in.	6 in.	6 in.	6 in.	6 in.	6 in.
Six feet	6 in.	6 in.	6 in.	12 in.	12 in.	6 in.
Seven feet	6 in.	9 in.	9 in.	12 in.	12 in.	9 in.
Eight feet	9 in.	9 in.	12 in.	12 in.	12 in.	12 in.
Nine feet	9 in.	9 in.	12 in.	12 in.	N/A	12 in.
Ten feet	9 in.	9 in.	12 in.	N/A	N/A	12 in.

For poured or installed foam or rubber surfaces, the materials must meet the ASTM F1292 requirements. Verify through a written statement from the manufacturer.